

E. Pennington on D.Heathcote's rules in using drama strategies



Literature

Keywords: Dorothy Heathcote, drama, The Doll's House, theatre, etc.

Adriana Dervishaj

**Lecturer at Tirana University
Faculty of Foreign Languages, English Department, Albania.**

Abstract

Students are engaged in an examination or exploration through the art form. They are not seen as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge and values; rather as crucibles, where attitudes, values, and understandings are stirred around, questioned and challenged. The primary aim therefore is not necessarily to do with acquiring knowledge or accumulating facts, although these may well be incorporated into the practical experience according to the founder of drama as a method of teaching, Dorothy Heathcote. The teacher has to be able to: avoid/withhold telling, tolerate apparent confusion, value each student's contribution, put to use the student's logic, utilize Tasks not Plot to maintain the Dramatic Tension, encourage Interaction, Feed in and demand relevant Vocabulary. The teacher pushes the students to complexities in the nicest way through possible useful enterprises. He or she teaches them the expertise through different activities as: device a system of security whilst planning the Layout of the Company Campus, Introduction of the New job, Global Warming issue, National discrimination, etc. The teacher gives instructions and prepares the gradual walking of the student into a role. Eileen used her Special teaching skills in applying Dorothy's method of teaching.

Introduction

To Dorothy Heathcote's application of drama as a methodology in teaching English.

The work of Dorothy Heathcote's application of drama was intended to open up considerations regarding studying play texts in general, though The Doll's House in this instance forms the context for the enquiry. Kenneth Tynan years ago suggested that for a situation to be dramatic "it must involve persons being on their way to, or in, or emerging from, a state of desperation" And Dame Edith Evans thinking as an actress, who must demonstrate that "state of desperation", saw play texts as presenting her with "a great sea, beset by currents, from which she must build firm land". These lands emerge first as small islands, which gradually become more and more attached to each other, (tenuously at first) until by the time of performance, hopefully, a coherent landscape has arisen from the gift words left by the author, which the actor guides the audience through. The dilemma we share as teachers is to find beguiling, efficient ways of crystallizing the particular elements and stages of "desperate circumstances" and of perceiving the landscape as coherent territory grown from the printed text.

This involves us in awakening in our students:

- i) The recognition that drama landscapes are based not upon narrative (the literary form) but of exploring and defining bondings which enmesh the roles in the play, in webs, some of which will be of their own making. Plays develop in episodes.
- ii) The landscapes will be finally expressed and communicated through the laws of theatre.

The seen, the indicated but not necessarily visible to the eye; the heard, and the telling silences during encounters; the moving and the still expressions through the action of events. To lift flat text from paper requires flexible visual imagination which people who can read adequately do not necessarily develop.

- iii) Theatre exploits other arts – design of garments, settings and furnishing, movement patterns, time, color, sound/silence and light, shadow and dark. This is the complex landscape brought to crisp expressive form, and becomes meaning to those who expect to find life enhancing confirmation of what it means to be human as they are audience to the playwright's message[s].

The Doll's House surely is splendidly worth our study in learning to learn about textual study. 'Doll's House Day' look at a short literary paragraph from a novel, or story, accounts of a real event, and bring it along with you.

These short literary texts can be used as a means of building visual imagination so necessary in studying theatre texts. Some of the tasks assigned to students may be to Write your copy clearly please. Your paragraph should include

people in some sort of action. An example chosen could be that moment from Rosemary Sutcliffe's version of 'Beowulf' when the Warriors hang the great arm of Grendel on the wall of Wrothgar's hall. Do feel free to select from any period, style or content which attracts you.

2. The unit analyzed employs lessons that focus on reading, discussing and analyzing a one-act play. Education Standards are:

1. Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting roles
2. Variety Types of Writing
3. Quality of Writing
4. Speaking and Listening
5. Research,
6. Production, Performance
7. Critical Response
8. Aesthetic Response

The expertise is obvious in providing useful data for a Sample Lesson Plan on: Read and Interpret "The Migrant's story" Subject: Literacy (Reading and Writing) Social Studies: Standard(s): Objectives and assignments

Reading, Speaking, Asking relevant questions, and responding to questions; write in a variety of forms; write for variety of purposes; and speak using effective communication skills. Social Studies Standard(s): culture, time continuity & change, people, places and environment. Concepts/ Skills: Apply role-playing to demonstrate an understanding of how drama affects, places movement and environment. Apply effective reading strategies to comprehend, organize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate texts to construct meaning. Description: Students will learn about the story and act it out in the class; Students will be introduced to the background of the story to understand cultural and social context; Students will also learn new vocabulary words, review main ideas, themes, and answer comprehension questions; Teacher should model how to use context clues to define interesting or difficult words and identify key drama techniques; Activity; Students will then craft their own roles. For the wrap up, creative writing activity students will Read for a variety of purposes: to seek information; to apply knowledge; to enhance enjoyment; to engage in inquiry and research; to expand world views; to understand individuality, shared humanity, and the heritage of the people in our city as well as the contributions of a diversity of groups to other cultures throughout the world.

Standard: Literature

Listen to, read, recognize, and respond to literature as a record of human experience that provides individual perspective, promotes understanding of multiple perspectives, and reflects the importance of cultural influences. Plan, draft, revise, and write using correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and effective vocabulary, appropriate to the purpose, context. Write for academic, personal, social, civic, and school-to-career purposes. Write in a variety of forms including journals, essays, stories, letters, plays, poems, and reports using figurative, descriptive, literary, and technical language. Conduct and document inquiry-based research using oral, print, and communications systems. Speak for a variety of purposes including informing, persuading, questioning, problem solving, sharing ideas and stories, reaching consensus, and responding sensitively and respectfully using language appropriate to the context, audience, and purpose. Speak using effective communication skills including enunciation, inflection, volume, fluency, and non-verbal gestures. Listen actively for a variety of purposes including comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, responding effectively, and for enjoyment. Standard: Listening - Recognize the diversity of oral English language use, patterns, and dialects, and understand its implications across social contexts, cultures, ethnic groups, and geography. Standard: Viewing. View media, technology, and live performances for a variety of purposes including gathering information, making informed judgments, processing information, and for enjoyment. Social Studies Standards; Culture; Time, Continuity, and Change. Analyze historical events, conditions, trends and issues to understand the way human beings view themselves, their institutions, and others, now and over time, to enable them to make informed choices and decisions. People, Places, and Environment. Apply geographic skills and knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of how geography affects people, places, movement, and environments. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of individuals, groups, and institutions and how their actions and interactions exert powerful influences on society. Reflecting on role-playing. Observe, reflect, and value the characteristics, meanings, uses, and merits of one's own Acting out. Description of Duties: Selects partners; Practices reading and presenting for live performances; Intelligence Used-Verbal Learners enjoy reading dramatic dialogues; Teacher supports all intelligences used by students.

Some additional planning during Term II

Plays for study this semester include “Much Ado About Nothing”, “Henry V”, “Hamlet”, “Measure for Measure” and “Othello”. Introduction to the Concept of Inter Cultural Drama, Introduction of “who” “where” “what” Vocabulary building, Gestures – Mime facial expression, Revision of classroom objectives, Voice – tone – mood – interaction. Basic Theory of Improvisation Skills, Warm up – recognition of key structures visual image/text to generate energy – ideas and develop concept of use of space. Personal reaction/response – non-verbal communication – silence – intonation – pause. Consolidating expression of likes and dislikes Movement – rhythm. Use of space. Introduction of key adjectives. Creative interpretation of sound patterns. Consolidation of food and drink vocab. Facial expression: Visual image, Concentration/control; Evaluation, continuous evaluation throughout process (verbal and written); Final evaluation of process through product; Presentation via video, evidence for research video. Janet introduced some key features of Dorothy’s teaching methods: Lessons learned for practical reasons in the classroom; Drama is used primarily to discover **meaning and** to come to **understandings**; it is the **vehicle for the learning**. Often the drama is serving learning from another area of the curriculum. The relation between pupil and teacher is collaborative. The children and the teacher are involved in an **enterprise** where the children are endowed with power and expertise to enable them shape and develop the work of the enterprise. The work involves making decisions and solving problems, often on behalf of someone else. The children are given a role within the drama related to the enterprise. The role gives a **point of view or stance** from which the class will approach the work. The role also gives them the power to express that point of view. With this in mind, the children don’t enact a character in the conventional sense. The children’s role gives them **status and expertise** not normally accredited or expected of children. Because the work is collaborative, the teacher has a role in the drama and **‘teaches’ from within the drama**. Like the role for the class, the teacher’s role is carefully selected to enable the work to progress, and to deepen the experience for the children. Teaching in this way involves interplay between the cognitive and the affective. Involves moving from the universal to the particular and back to the universal. We have learnt important lessons: DRAMA = DOING LIFE - Insists on Exploring what it means to be human; Investigating the way we live together – human relations. Implies that All knowledge and information is available to be explored. This is achieved through fiction/narrative, which is drawn from and feeds back to real life. The appearance is **playing**, the reality is **learning**. The appearance is **pretence**; the reality is working towards an understanding of the **truth**. Classroom drama: Is **task based**; Is based on **representations**; Must generate **meaning and understanding**; The drama teacher must: Be the **playwright**; **Protect** the children into the exploration; **Share** power and responsibility. The product will be a realization and recognition of what has been explored. Drama serves many learning functions, at one moment it can be a **motivating force**, at another a **performance**. The material of drama is the thinking, behaving human, seeking for the truth. Levels of understanding and awareness in depiction work: Once the students have made a depiction, give each of them a number of small pieces of paper, (the number will depend on the number of levels you intend using), and ask them to number them. Ask them to place the pieces of paper near to where they are in the still image, so that they are close to hand but not in the image. Ask the students to make the depiction, whilst they are frozen ask them to think about the question at the first level. They write their response on one of the pieces of paper. Repeat the process each time asking the students to think about the person they are in the picture at a different level. You will need to give them the start to the sentence each time and ask them to write each statement on a separate piece of paper. The levels are as follows:

1. Who are you?

I am

2. What are you doing?

I am

3. Why are you doing this?

I am doing this because

4. What do you want to achieve by doing this?

I hope that by doing this I will

5. How did you understand that this behaviour was appropriate to the situation?

I know that this is the appropriate/right/correct thing to do because

6. What are the beliefs that guide your life?

I believe that

Depending on the ability of the class you might want to stop after level 3 or 4 and substitute the following:

What is your greatest hope for the future?

My greatest hope is that

What is your greatest fear?

My greatest fear is that

Levels of understanding and awareness in depiction work as devised by Dorothy Heathcote

Low awareness

1. ACTION- the behaviour, the way that something is done

What are you doing?

I am.....

2. MOTIVATION – why the person is carrying out this action, and what they want out of it.

Why are you carrying out this activity?

I am doing this because.....

3. INVESTMENT – what's at stake for the person?

I hope/intend/expect/believe that.....

4. MODEL – where is the behaviour drawn from

What made you understand that such behaviour was appropriate to the situation?

I copied.....

I was ordered.....

I read that.....

I was trained.....

5. STANCE OR PHILOSOPHY – why is life like this?

My philosophy is.....

I believe that.....

Finally, Role types for teachers (dictator, community leader, reporter, intermediary, one of the gang, someone in need of help, etc), status (high, higher than others, high or low, high, equal or low, equal, low, etc), and function (give information, offer experience, promote reflection, move the narrative on, enhance the quality of the contributions, shift power relationship, etc) proved to be very effective in creating classroom drama.

In conclusion

Making Sense of Drama is based on the belief that drama has an important part to play in helping teachers move toward a unified curriculum that has relevance and purpose for young people of all ages. It will give teachers from all subject areas the confidence to explore the possibilities of drama in the classroom.

References

1. Bjerstedt, A. (1976) Explorations in creativity. *Didakometry&Sociometry*. 8, 1, pp.3-19..
2. Boden, M. (2001). Creativity and knowledge. In *Creativity in Education* (A. Craft, B. Jeffrey & M. Leibling, eds). London, Continuum.
3. Booth, D. 1994. *Story Drama: Reading, writing and roleplaying across the curriculum*. Toronto: Pembroke Publishers Limited.
4. Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
5. Coutts, G. (2003) Art and Design Education. In T. Bryce and W. Humes (Eds) *Scottish Education, 2nd Edition: Post-Devolution*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
7. Craft, A (1999). Creative development in the early years: some implications of policy for practice. *The Curriculum Journal* 10(1): 135 - 150.
8. Cropley, A. J. (2001). *Creativity in education and learning: a guide for teachers and educators*. London: Kogan Page Limited.
9. Lee, B. (1988). Intellectual origins of Vygotsky's semiotic analysis. In: J. Wertsch et al. (eds), *Culture, communication, cognition*: Cambridge University Press.
10. Sless, D. (1986). In search of semiotics. In: D. Chandler. *Semiotics for beginners*. www.aber.ac.uk
11. Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*: MIT Press.
12. Wygotski, L. S. (1995) English source: Vygotsky, L. S. (1976). Play and its role in the mental development of the child. In: J. Bruner et al. (eds), *Play*. New York: Penguin.